

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000174

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NB AND EUR/RUS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2014

TAGS: PREL PGOV LH

SUBJECT: LITHUANIA-RUSSIA COMMISSION DISCUSS TARIFFS, DEBT, AND BORDER DEMARCATON

Classified By: POL/ECON OFFICER TREVOR BOYD
FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1.(U) Summary. Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis and Russian Minister of Transportation Igor Levitin, Co-Chairmen of the Lithuanian-Russian Intergovernmental Commission, discussed railway tariffs, debt, border demarcation, and Russia's return of cultural and archival material on February 19. The two agreed to cooperate on a joint project to improve the Sovetsk-Panemune border checkpoint and to hold a meeting of the full commission in Vilnius later this fall. The meeting is a reminder that, despite ongoing tensions in that bilateral relationship, the two governments conduct a constructive dialogue on many issues. End Summary.

12. (U) Lithuanian FM Valionis and Russian MinTrans Levitin met in Trakai, the ancient capital of Lithuania, February 19, in a session of the Lithuanian-Russian Intergovernmental Commission, a body the GOL and GOR established in 1995 to advance bilateral relations. Media reports of the meeting highlighted Valionis's call for the return of cultural and archival material to Lithuania and the ministers' discussion about concluding a GOL-GOR agreement on pensions.

13. (C) Arunas Vinciunas, head of MFA's Russia Division, on February 22 gave us a read-out of the meeting. Vinciunas highlighted discussions on three topics: railway tariffs, debt, and border demarcation:

-- Railway Tariffs: Levitin asked the GOL to suspend its announced tariff increases on third-country cargo (mostly Central Asian) to the Lithuanian seaport of Klaipeda. The parties agreed to begin working level meetings on the issue in two-three weeks.

-- Debt: Valionis asked Levitin to help expedite the return of both Soviet and Russian debts to Lithuanian citizens and enterprises. The GOR owes more than \$15 million to Lithuanian construction companies for joint projects in the early 1990s. Valionis asked for GOR assistance in helping more than 2,200 Lithuanian citizens recuperate more than \$7 million in personal deposits made to the Soviet bank Vneshekonombank.

-- Border Demarcation: Valionis and Levitin agreed to undertake a joint project to improve the border demarcation, signposts, and bridge at the Lithuanian-Russian checkpoint at Sovetsk Panemune.

14. (C) Comment. Despite the acrimony and geopolitical tension that dominate media coverage of Lithuanian-Russian relations, Lithuanian and Russian leaders plug away at the details of their complex (often harmonious) bilateral relations. The re-energized Commission, dormant in the absence of a Russian co-chairman since the March 2004 GOR reshuffle, marks a step forward in a more constructive, positive bilateral relationship.

Mull